

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00535 272314Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 PRS-01 SPC-01 INR-10 PM-03 DRC-01

RSC-01 /042 W

----- 113331

R 272110Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7700

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0535

STADIS//////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, MILL, HA, US

SUBJECT: HAITI'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER SEEKS CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP

1. SUMMARY: DURING EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH ME MARCH 26 NEWLY DESIGNATED FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS SPOKE FREELY AND AUTHORITATIVELY ABOUT US/GOH RELATIONS, THE PROBLEM OF HAITI'S IMAGE IN THE U.S., THE ECONOMIC PRIORITIES OF PRESIDENT DUVALIER, AND THE LIMITED SELF-DEFENSE ORIENTATION OF THE HAITIAN MILITARY. BRUTUS WILL HEAD GOH DELEGATION APRIL 17/18 FONMIN MEETING.

2. EDNER BRUTUS, THE ELEGANT, ARTICULATE, AND VIGOROUS SCHOLAR/DIPLOMAT WHO REPLACED RAYMOND AS FOREIGN MINISTER, WAS IN GOOD FORM DURING A 1 1/2 HOUR CONVERSATION WITH ME MARCH 26 (THE FIRST AUDIENCE, HE NOTED, HE HAD GIVEN ANY AMBASSADOR). HE SEEMED THOROUGHLY AT EASE, APPEARED TO BE ON CLOSE TERMS WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER, AND THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSION CONVEYED HIS DEDICATION TO BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. BASED ON CANDOR, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND THE RECOGNITION OF SHARED HISTORY AND SHARED IDEALS. "GEOGRAPHIC DETERMINISM", HE SAID, LEFT HAITI NO ALTERNATIVE BUT FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., AND IN ITS EFFORTS TO RECONSTRUCT THE ECONOMY HAITI
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WOULD LOOK TO THE U.S. FOR COUNSEL AND HELP, WITHOUT

HOWEVER SEEKING SPECIAL TREATMENT OR POSING INORDINATE DEMANDS. MEN, JUST AS GOVERNMENT, OWED IT TO THEMSELVES ABOVE ALL TO BE HONEST, ADMIT MISTAKES, AND PROCEED FROM THERE; HE WOULD BASE HIS CONDUCT OF OFFICE ON THAT PRECEPT.

3. I SAID THESE SENTIMENTS ACCORDED WELL WITH OUR OWN, AS EXPRESSED MOST RECENTLY BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF AMBASSADOR BOUCHETTE'S PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS. I RAISED THE MATTER OF THE FORTHCOMING SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON THE AID PROGRAM FOR HAITI, EXPLAINING THAT ALTHOUGH THIS WAS A MATTER FOR US TO DEAL WITH, THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE WELL AWARE OF THE NATURE OF THE CRITICISMS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT AND SHOULD TAKE THEM INTO ACCOUNT.

4. BRUTUS TOOK THIS WELL, CONCEDED THAT HAITI'S IMAGE IN THE U.S. HAD BEEN A BAD ONE CONSEQUENT UPON THE HARSH POLITICAL BATTLES UNDER DUVALIER PERE; THE EXILES IMAGINED THAT TIME STOPPED THE MOMENT THEY LEFT THEIR COUNTRY; THEY COULD NOT ADJUST PSYCHOLOGICALLY TO CHANGES FOR THE BETTER. HE SAID THAT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER, ALTHOUGH BEARING HIS FATHER'S NAME, SAW HIMSELF AS UNDERTAKING AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT VOCATION FOR HAITI. THE FIERCE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BATTLES WERE OVER; THE CURRENT TASK WAS TO ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC STRUCTURE ADEQUATE FOR HAITI'S NEEDS, FOR ANY REVOLUTION THAT IGNORED THE NATIONAL ECONOMY WOULD BE FRAGILE. THE PRESIDENT WAS DEDICATED TO PEACE AND HONESTY; HE WOULD "MAKE WAR ON THE THIEVES;" BUT HE HAD TO MOVE WITH CIRCUMSPECTION, FOR THERE WERE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN ALL MOVES TO THAT END.

5. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO REFER TO GOH ARMS EXPENDITURES, SPECIFICALLY TO A LICENSE APPLICATION FOR T-28 ARMAMENT SETS, NOTING THAT THIS EXPENDITURE WOULD NOT BE IN GOH INTERESTS SINCE THE AIRCRAFT, IN CONTRAST TO WHAT THE MILITARY SURVEY TEAM HAD ENVISAGED OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD, WERE NOT YET OPERATIONAL, NOR WERE THERE ENOUGH PILOTS TRAINED TO FLY THEM. MOREOVER SUCH AN EXPENDITURE MIGHT BE MISUNDERSTOOD IN QUARTERS ALREADY CRITICAL OF THE GOH. BRUTUS COMMENTED THAT IN VIEW OF PAST INVASION ATTEMPTS THE MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

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WAS DESIGNED TO DISSUADE OTHER VENTURES, NOT FOR USE DOMESTICALLY. HE AGREED IN ANY CASE THAT MILITARY EXPENDITURES SHOULD NOT BE EXCESSIVE. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE COULD NOT APPROVE THE APPLICATION AT THIS TIME, BUT SEEMED PLEASED TO KNOW THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A MODEST TRAINING AND REEQUIPMENT PROGRAM FOR HAITI ALONG THE LINES RECOMMENDED BY THE MILITARY SURVEY TEAM.

6. COMMENT: BRUTUS IS IN A CLASS FAR ABOVE HIS PREDECESSOR RAYMOND. EQUIPPED BY EXPERIENCE AND TEMPERAMENT TO BE A WISE COUNSELLOR, AND WITHOUT ANY HIGHER AMBITIONS OF HIS OWN, HE SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT STABILIZING ELEMENT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WHICH PRESIDENT DUVALIER IS STILL DEVELOPING. BACKSTOPPED BY THE ACTION-ORIENTED AND PROFESSIONALLY COMPETENT DORCELY AS UNDER SECRETARY, BRUTUS BIDS FAIR TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO HAITI'S MORE RATIONAL AND OUTGOING FOREIGN POLICIES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, CABINET, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, MILITARY SALES, MILITARY PLANS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PORTA00535
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740066-0756
From: PORT AU PRINCE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740311/aaaaajyu.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 SEP 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <08 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HAITI'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER SEEKS CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, MILI, HA, US, (BRUTUS, EDNER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005